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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5732  
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 6041  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1269  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4062  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5346  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1458  
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 3477  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2678  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KATHMANDU 000990

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: CARTER CENTER WORRIED ABOUT THE TERA

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

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1. (C) On May 7, Peter Burleigh, Carter Center consultant, described the situation in the Terai as one of fundamental insecurity. Burleigh told the Charge d'Affaires that the Government of Nepal (GON) needed to set a firm date for the Constituent Assembly (CA) election and expressed concern over the existing political vacuum in the countryside. Carter Center Field Director Darren Nance informed Embassies May 14 that top Maoist leaders had told Burleigh they were facing internal party strife. Nance stated that Maoist Chief Prachanda and his deputy Baburam Bhattarai had cited ongoing problems in the cantonments and the behavior of the Young Communist League (YCL) as the core issues of contention. The Maoist officials had conceded that the YCL was a problem that needed to be addressed. Nance also said that the Maoists intended to continue pressing for a republic, but were willing to accept a constitutional amendment that allowed for the King's dismissal on a two-thirds vote of the Interim Parliament. Nance also noted that several political and civic leaders had mentioned to Burleigh the possibility of an election date in April or May 2008.

Carter Center Assesses Election Climate in the Terai

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2. (C) From May 3 to 10, a delegation from the Carter Center visited Nepal to assess the political climate and the outlook for the Constituent Assembly (CA) election. On May 7, former Ambassador Peter Burleigh and David Pottie, the Carter Center's Associate Director, reported to the the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, who then was serving as the Charge d'Affaires, on their three-day visit to the Terai (Nepal's southern borderland with India). In Birgunj (Parsa District), Kalaiya (Bara District) and Gaur (Rautahat District) and the site of a massacre of Maoists by Madhesi in March) on May 4-6, the team had observed a complete lack of authority, routine shootings and fundamental insecurity. Burleigh stated that "everybody is scared." The Carter Center representatives described what they perceived to be a complete disconnect between the national level and the district level, with the political parties no longer viewed as valid political structures in the Terai.

## Announcement of New Election Date Obligatory

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13. (C) Burleigh noted that many of the issues arising in the current political vacuum could be minimized with the announcement of a new CA election date. The Carter Center Senior Consultant emphasized that the Government of Nepal (GON) needed to set a date it could keep; false promises would exacerbate the situation. Burleigh also expressed his disappointment in learning that the GON was still discussing which election model to use. He had hoped that the model would have already been agreed upon by now so that the necessary legislation could be passed. The Carter Center representatives reported that all of the political parties continue to speak about a pro-royalist "American conspiracy" to prevent the elections and keep the Terai unstable. Regarding the situation in the cantonments, Burleigh told the then Charge d'Affaires that it was widely believed that once verification began the UN would declare fifty percent of the "combatants" in the camps under-aged or newly recruited.

## Maoists Admit Internal Discord to Carter Center

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14. (C) On May 14, the Carter Center's Field Director Darren Nance told Emboffs that Maoist chief Pushpa Dahal (a.k.a. Prachanda) and his deputy Dr. Baburam Bhattarai had admitted the Maoists were facing internal party discord. Dahal and Bhattarai had cited continuing problems in the cantonments and the behavior of the Young Communist League (YCL) as the core issues of contention. The Field Director reported that the Maoist senior leaders had told the delegation that the "former combatants" in the camps were unhappy and frustrated

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with the unhealthy conditions in the camps and the lack of political progress. The Maoists had also conceded that the YCL was a problem that had to be addressed. The YCL was supposed to be demonstrating the party's commitment to delivering services to the public and its continuing use of violence was counter-productive, they admitted.

## Maoists on the King, a Republic and an Election Date

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15. (C) Nance told Emboffs that the Maoist leaders had told the Carter Center that they would continue to push for the removal of the King and declaration of a republic. However, they had indicated they would accept a constitutional amendment that allowed for the King's dismissal on a vote of two-thirds of the Interim Parliament should the King attempt to disrupt the CA election process. Nance said that Dahal and Bhattarai had talked about an election date in November, but had also mentioned the possibility of an election in April or May 2008. (Nance noted that other political and civil leaders had also mentioned April or May 2008 to Burleigh.) The Field Director said that the Maoists were upset with the Madhesis stealing their slogans, thought they were getting outmaneuvered in the Parliament, and remained upset with the U.S. Government's refusal to recognize their "efforts" to move toward democracy. Nance also mentioned that the Maoist leaders had stated that they intended to hold a top-level secretariat meeting sometime during the week of May 14 to continue the discussions that had begun at the party's Central Committee meeting in April.

## Comment

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16. (C) The Carter Center delegation's description of the situation in the Terai is disturbing but not suprising. We expect the security situation there will continue to deteriorate until the existing political vacuum is addressed. An announcement by the Government of Nepal of a new election date and the launch of a meaningful dialogue with the Madhesis would likely improve the situation dramatically.

Although there may be discussion of delaying the election until April or May 2008, there also seems to be a political consensus that a date roughly twelve months from now would be unacceptable to the public and feed its growing distrust of the political parties and the GON. We expect that as soon as a constitutional amendment is adopted to allow for the abolition of the Monarchy, the Maoists would accuse the King of interference and push for a vote on his dismissal. Meanwhile, Dahal and Bhattarai griping about the YCL strikes us as the height of absurdity. While there is no doubt tension within the Maoist movement, we are extremely dubious of claims that Dahal has no control over the YCL.

MORIARTY